Oklahoma Chess Monthly

AUGUST 2020

Chess News and Chess History for Oklahoma

Marion V. Murray — Oklahoma's First Prodigy?

In This Issue:

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THE MYSTERY OF MISS MARION MURRAY

The Story of Oklahoma's Chess Prodigy You Never Heard of — A Girl Who Drew With A World Champion … and Then Disappeared

by Tom Braunlich and Harold Brown Jr.

In 2018 I came across a jaw-dropping newspaper article from 1926 on the Internet:

A girl from Tulsa, Marion V. Murray, age 12, drew a simul game in New York City with Jose Raul Capablanca, who was then the reigning world champion. Could this be true? You can see the article claims many other astonishing chess feats for the girl. But I had never heard of her.

(See article in full, next page)

"Oklahoma's Official Chess Bulletin Covering Oklahoma Chess on a Regular Schedule Since 1982"

http://ocfchess.org

Oklahoma Chess Foundation

Register Online for Free

Editor: Tom Braunlich

Asst. Ed. Rebecca Rutledge

Published the 1st of each month.

Send story submissions and tournament reports, etc., by the 15th of the previous month to mailto:tom.braunlich@cox.net

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Pity Charles Murray, Dad and Husband, to—

A Chess Champ! A Movie Actress! And an Oil Magnate!

Marion Murray playing chess blindfolded with Frank J. Marshall, U. S. champion. Her mother is standing at the extreme right. Insert, another picture of young Marion.

By VIRGINIA SWAIN

NEW YORK, Aug. 15.—It takes a brave man to put up with one feminine career in the family. Charles Murray of Tulsa, Okla., has to put up with three—distributed between his wife and daughter, the two Marion Murrays.

The first is the career of the elder Marion, whose phenomenal success in oil promotion culminated in her coming to New York recently, to handle a merger involving $25,000,000.

A great-granddaughter of Churchill Downs, the famous Kentucky racing man, Marion Downs Murray has made millions for herself and her associates since her entrance into the oil game five years ago.

The first dividend paid by her oil company was a modest 600 per cent.

Career number two in the Murray family is the moving picture acting of the younger Marion, fourteen. Introduced to the screen in a film produced by her mother, the junior Marion has had important child roles in various companies.

The third career is the spectacular chess playing of Marion, Jr. She fought Jose Capablanca, world chess champion to a draw in a tourney recently, after he had defeated 42 other challengers.

Marion says she won't rest until she beats him and captures the world title for herself.

She never played a game of chess until last January. She now can carry the entire game in her memory, and plays as well blind-folded as seeing. She defeated the American chess champion in a blind-folded game in July.

How did the two Marions build their careers? Ask Dad Murray. He knows.

It is an ironic fact that he taught them both the arts in which they ave since excelled him. His wife learned the A. B. C's of oil from watching his operations. She began when he failed to bring in a much-desired well. And against the predictions of specialists, she proved herself an eminently efficient financier, geogolist, superintendent and driller. Her profits far exceed her husband's.

Then along came Marion, Jr. Her father had given much of his time to chess of late years. Last winter he taught his little daughter to play, and in a few days she was unmercifully beating him.

Her success at the game puzzles the chess analysts, who prophesy that she will be the greatest player of aggressive chess that America has ever known.

Charles Murray still plays oil—and he still plays chess. He says he is manager of the two Marions. But he smiles when he says it.

He ought to be in the picture of this remarkable family. But he flatly refused. The two Marions may be celebrities—but he's just Dad.

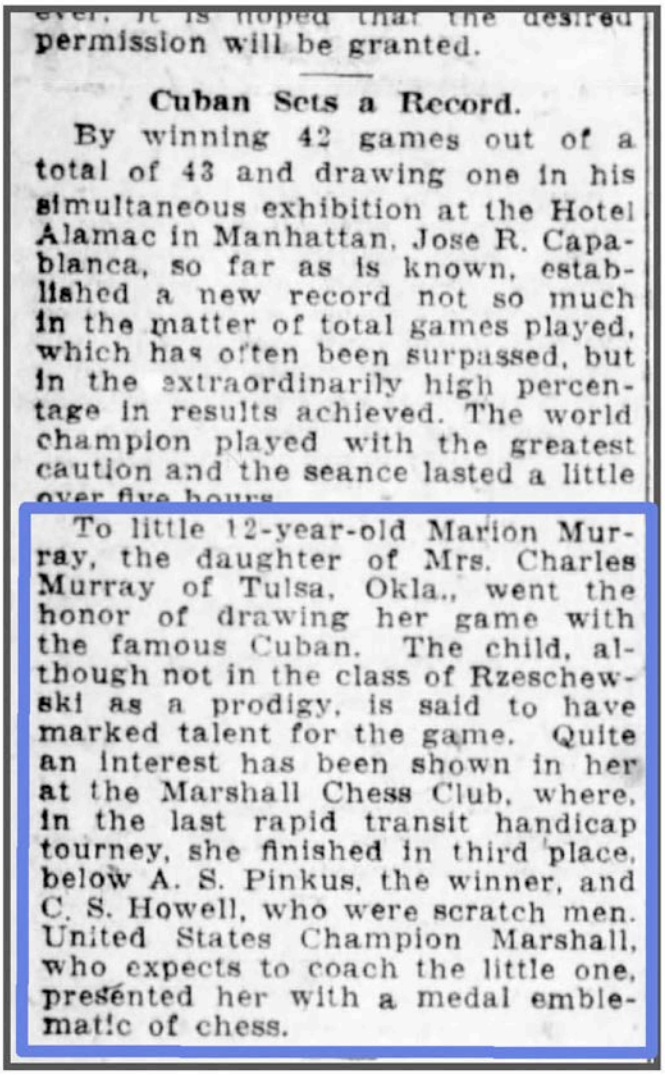
SOMETI

YOU A

LOOKIN

Press release promoting Marion V. Murray, of Tulsa, which appeared in many newspapers in August 1926. She is portrayed here playing blindfold chess against U.S. Champion Frank Marshall.

I showed the article to Harold Brown, who is an experienced researcher, and we soon were able to confirm it. *The New York Times* had also reported the result, and the *American Chess Bulletin* did too:



permission will be granted.

Cuban Sets a Record.

By winning 42 games out of a total of 43 and drawing one in his simultaneous exhibition at the Hotel Alamac in Manhattan, Jose R. Capablanca, so far as is known, established a new record not so much in the matter of total games played, which has often been surpassed, but in the extraordinarily high percentage in results achieved. The world champion played with the greatest caution and the seance lasted a little

To little 12-year-old Marion Murray, the daughter of Mrs. Charles Murray of Tulsa, Okla., went the honor of drawing her game with the famous Cuban. The child, although not in the class of Rzeschewski as a prodigy, is said to have marked talent for the game. Quite an interest has been shown in her at the Marshall Chess Club, where, in the last rapid transit handicap tourney, she finished in third place, below A. S. Pinkus, the winner, and C. S. Howell, who were scratch men. United States Champion Marshall, who expects to coach the little one, presented her with a medal emblematic of chess.

To get a draw with a reigning world champion is an impressive feat for anyone, even in a simul. As far as I know Marion V. Murray is the only Oklahoman who has ever done it. We have two Okies who defeated Bobby Fischer in simuls – Ross Carbonell and D. Ballard – but that was eight years before Fischer attained the world title. (Can anyone think of another?)

And what about the claim shown in the photo … that she had defeated Frank Marshall (grandmaster, and many-time U.S. Champion) while blindfolded? That a girl at this time could even *play* a blindfolded game through to the end is remarkable by itself, much less

> *"Her mother was also named Marion Murray, and it soon became clear that the mother was the most important Marion in the story. The "Mrs." was the power behind the aggressive promotion of the "Miss."*

defeat Marshall, even in casual play as shown in the photo. It is a skill mostly associated with strong master players.

We set out to discover more about this elusive prodigy from Tulsa.

Of course, the article itself is fishy. It is clearly a publicity release – a pre-packaged story sent to the newspaper and intended to promote the girl's fame and career. You can tell by the flowery and glowing language, and the vagueness of its claims. Indeed, the article you see here, which appeared in the *Niagara Falls Gazette* was also seen exactly the same in several other small newspapers around the country at the same time, including Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Presumably it was in the Tulsa papers as well, but we don't know that as the archived Tulsa newspapers for the year 1926 are not online yet. It was common practice then, and still is today, for publicity agents to write a 'ready-to-go' "Press Release" article and send it out to newspapers in the hope they will publish them. Newspapers are always understaffed and under deadlines to fill each issue with readable news. Ideally, an interesting press release like this would be given by a good editor to a young reporter, who would be asked to check out the claims it makes and rewrite the release into something less blatantly promotional. When I worked on a paper in the late 1970s I had to do that at times. Often however, lazy editors would just insert the whole thing – unchanged – into the newspaper. That happened here.

"Remember," Harold said, "this was the 'flapper era' – the age of aggressive self-promotion."

TOP 25

For AUGUST 2020
Two players dropped from list this month

Active Oklahoma Players				
	Player	This Month	Change	
1	Advait Patel	2537	0	
2	Jeffrey Haskel	2355	0	
3	Howard Zhong	2307	0	
4	Tom Braunlich	2200	0	▲
5	Mark Hulsey	2199	0	▲
6	Ryan Amburgy	2159	20	▲
7	Anthony Paolercio	2080	0	▲
8	Veronika Zilajeva	2080	0	▲
9	Tom Patton	2077	0	▲
10	Charles D Unruh	2063	0	▲
11	James Long	2053	0	▲
12	Michael Nugent	2042	0	▲
13	Matt Dalthorp	2029	0	▲
14	Charles M Unruh	2024	0	▲
15	Chuck Johnson	2010	0	▲
16	Jeff Colbert	2008	0	▲
17	Stephen Gehly	2000	0	▲
18	David Luscomb	1995	0	▲
19	Joe Dean Veal	1941	0	▲
20	Charles Woodall	1937	0	▲
21	Paul Hodgden	1935	0	▲
22	Wayne Hatcher	1926	0	▲
23	Logan Zachare	1910	-74	▼
24	Harold Brown Jr.	1901	0	▲
25	Adley Bufford	1894	80	▲

Player of the Month

ELIZABETH BRADDY

She's been working hard and it showed, ranked 36th but finishing tied for 14th in the Haring Nat'l Girls Invitational.

Indeed, and it also was the age of Sammy Reshevsky, the kid prodigy who was aggressively promoted this way in similar glowing articles, although in his case the claims were well founded. He was a true prodigy, but there were also publicity articles pushed by his agents about him hob-knobbing with Hollywood stars, and royalty.

So Harold and I decided to see what else we could find out about Miss Marion Murray. I have to say, "Miss" because her mother was also named Marion Murray, and it soon became clear that the mother was the most important Marion in the story.

The "Mrs." was the power behind the aggressive promotion of the "Miss."

The Mystery Deepens

We found a few other chess items about the girl, also from 1926 (see below), but the publicity about her then abruptly stops. I wrote to the Marshall Chess Club in New York, founded by Frank Marshall himself, and was referred to their historian. But nothing more about her was found. No other news were found about her in chess periodicals of the time. She apparently dropped out of chess after 1926.

It is not uncommon for chess prodigies to flare up occasionally, with the media proclaiming them 'The Next [insert name of current champion]' only to be never heard from again. But of all such prodigies, how many of them were girls? Very few.

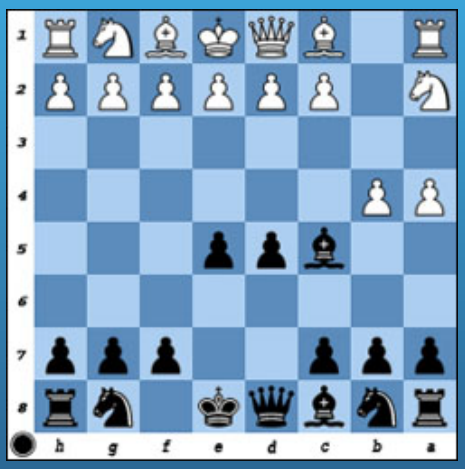
And there is the question of whether this somehow was all a publicity ruse. Did she really beat Marshall blindfolded? Did she really draw Capablanca? Clearly these things were hyped up and exaggerated … so one wonders if they even happened at all.

The Story

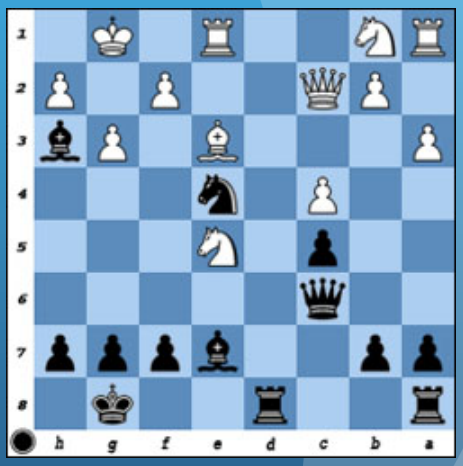
We have been able to put together an outline of the real story of Marion Murray and her mother, for the two go together hand-in-hand, literally. It is a remarkable tale. Of course, many of the details are missing, and

PUZZLES

Answers Next Page



BLACK to move and win. (Easy)



BLACK to move and win. (Difficult)

unfortunately seem to be lost to time. But what we have found would make the beginnings of an interesting novel, with shades of *The Great Gatsby* and, at the end, perhaps a little bit of *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*?

Marion Victoria Murray was born in 1914, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Her mother was *Marion Downs Murray*, a member of a rich family, a descendant of *Churchill Downs*, the Kentucky landowner whose name you recognize because the famous racetrack of the Kentucky Derby was named after him.

Her father was *Charles Murray*, a wealthy real estate developer in Minnesota. Charles was 20 years older than his wife. He was also an avid amateur chess player.

Mrs. Murray was no stay-at-home wife. She was active and ambitious. After the end of World War I, starting in 1919, an Oil Boom was going on, and great fortunes were being won (and lost). The center of this boom was in Oklahoma and Texas, and Tulsa had become known as the "Oil Capital of the World." The boom had actually been going on since 1901, but it really kicked in after the world war ended. Everyone in the state with some money to spare invested to buy shares in the many wildcat wells that sprang up, hoping to hit a gusher. My own grandfather, who owned an automobile dealership in Okmulgee at the time, invested in one. So important was the oil here that the local newspapers had daily sections devoted solely to oil news, both from a business and a society perspective. Most investors lost their money, but enough people hit it big that the boom lasted, and Tulsa had more millionaires per capita than any other city. Tulsa grew exponentially, with new buildings in the "art deco" style sprang up all over downtown in the 1920s, for which Tulsa is now nationally known.

Answers to the Puzzles

(1) Black has a three-bank billiard shot! 1. …Bxf2+! 2. Kxf2 Qh4+ 3. g3 (only move) Qd4+ 4. Kg2, Qxa1 and wins.

(2) Black's Queen is under attack, but he would really like to move his knight away with tempo somehow so that …Qg2 mate could be threatened. So, this might give you the idea for 1. …Ng5!? since if 2. Nxc6? Nf3+ 3. Kh1 Bg2+! 4. Kxg2 Nxe1+ 5. Kf1 Nxc2 and black wins. But the problem is 1. …Ng5 can be met by 2. f4 by white, defending the g2 square. But don't give up on this idea! It comes so close! Look and see there is another way to move the knight so that it threatens to come to f3: 1. … Nd2!! Now if 2. Nxc6 Nf3+ transposes to the above variation, and in the meantime white's move 2. to defend against mate on g2 doesn't work now, because the black knight is in the way!

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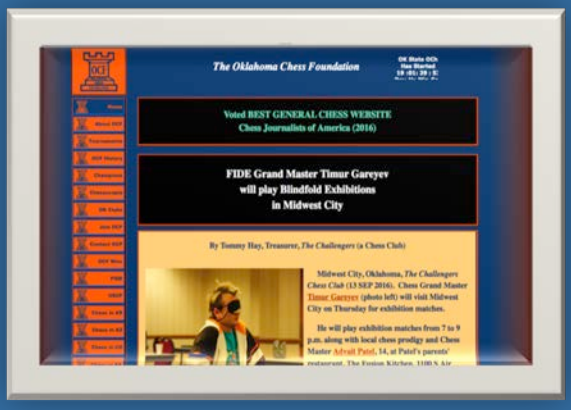
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FIDE Grand Master Timur Gareyev
will play Blindfold Exhibitions
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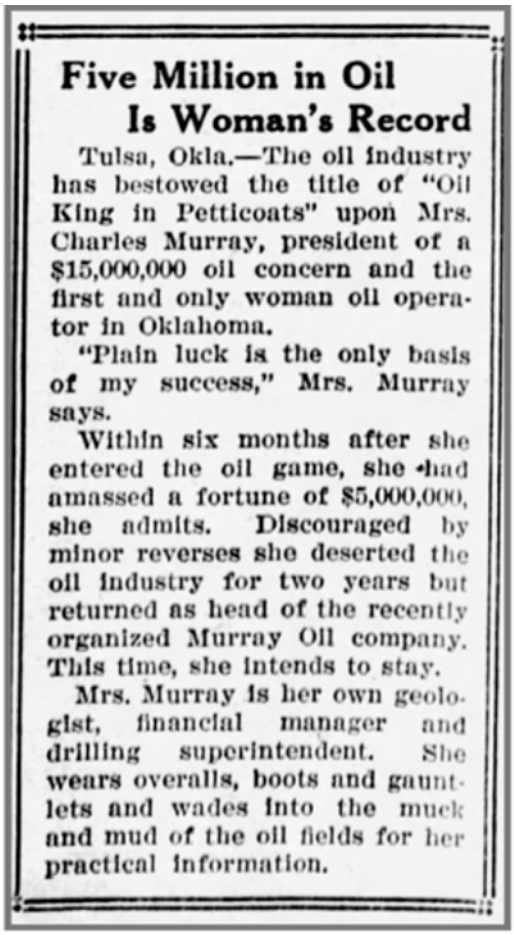
So, inevitably, Marion Downs Murray heard of this boom and wanted to try her hand in it. Sometime after 1920 she convinced her husband to come to Tulsa, with their young child, and invest some money into oil projects. He brought in geologists and specialists to help him, but Mrs. Murray claimed to be able to do it herself and her husband funded her attempts.

She scored much better than he did! Apparently she succeeded on her first try near Bristow. The well was a gusher, beyond their wildest dreams, even though she ignored the advice of experts on where she chose to drill. Soon their independent oil company was being run mainly by her, and was later claimed to be valued at $25 million, according to one report in New York.



Five Million in Oil Is Woman's Record

Tulsa, Okla.—The oil industry has bestowed the title of "Oil King in Petticoats" upon Mrs. Charles Murray, president of a $15,000,000 oil concern and the first and only woman oil operator in Oklahoma.

"Plain luck is the only basis of my success," Mrs. Murray says.

Within six months after she entered the oil game, she had amassed a fortune of $5,000,000, she admits. Discouraged by minor reverses she deserted the oil industry for two years but returned as head of the recently organized Murray Oil company. This time, she intends to stay.

Mrs. Murray is her own geologist, financial manager and drilling superintendent. She wears overalls, boots and gauntlets and wades into the muck and mud of the oil fields for her practical information.

Their family went from 'rich' to 'super-rich' within a year. Articles began to appear in the Tulsa World promoting Marion Downs Murray as the "Queen of the Oil Fields," a phrase no doubt of her own devising and promotion. And it is true that all the other wildcat oil speculators were men, and to see a woman out tromping around in the mud of an oilfield with boots on was a rare sight.

The Murrays now had more money than they new what to do with, and they began to spend it on the high life. By 1922-23, when young Miss Murray was eight years old, the family spent time in Palm Springs, California. There Mrs. Murray invested $10,000 in two motion picture ventures, one of them called, "The Rose of the Ghetto," produced by Oliver Morosco. Her main purpose in doing this, it seems, was to see if she could get her cute and precocious young daughter to become a movie star.

The movies were not successful, but that did not stop Mrs. Murray from hiring P.R. agents to promote young Miss Murray as a 'coming new star' in the early and glamorous days of Hollywood. She even hired *Melbourne Spur*, the famous Hollywood photographer and portrait artist (who did beautifully stylish photographs of all the big stars and is still famous for it today, search for his stuff online if you want to see some great photography of glamorous models), to do publicity portraits of young Marion.

Although the girl acted only in those two movies, her mother kept promoting her as an upcoming star for several years, still hoping to make it happen. For example, on a trip to Billings, Montana in 1925 – to examine some properties there which she was considering for some test oil wells – Mrs. Murray arranged for a display of Marion's portraits by Spur to be shown in the city's movie theater lobby, and did an interview with the local paper promoting the girl as much as promoting herself.

In 1926, when the young Miss Murray was 12 years old, the Murray family moved their main residence from Tulsa to New York City. They were so rich that they moved into a penthouse in the world famous Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, about as swanky an address as one can have in

Manhattan.

Here the chess adventures began. According to their press releases, Charles Murray had taught his young daughter how to play the game in January 1926. It is claimed she soon was able to beat him, and apparently she showed some skill at it – although it is hard to know how good she was since the only source seems to be the publicity articles. Regardless, when they moved to New York, no doubt Mr. Murray would have become a member of the Marshall Chess Club, one of two major clubs there, and perhaps his daughter was interested enough to come along. There they would have met many of the greatest masters in the country, as well as chess promoters and financiers.

Through the club they would have been introduced into tournaments, and no doubt Mr. Murray would have been approached to help contribute money to fund master events. It is quite likely he did so, and also quite likely he was part of the sponsorship of the simultaneous exhibition by world champion Jose R. Capablanca.

On June 26, 1926, the Capablanca exhibition was held at the Hotel Alamac in Manhattan, a luxury hotel at 71st and Broadway. (See photo.) This site was the venue of many chess events at the time, because the general manager was a chess player and club member, Harry Latz. The Latz family owned many luxury hotels, all named Alamac.

Just two years earlier it was the site of the famous *New York 1924* grandmaster tournament, one of the most famous chess events of all time.

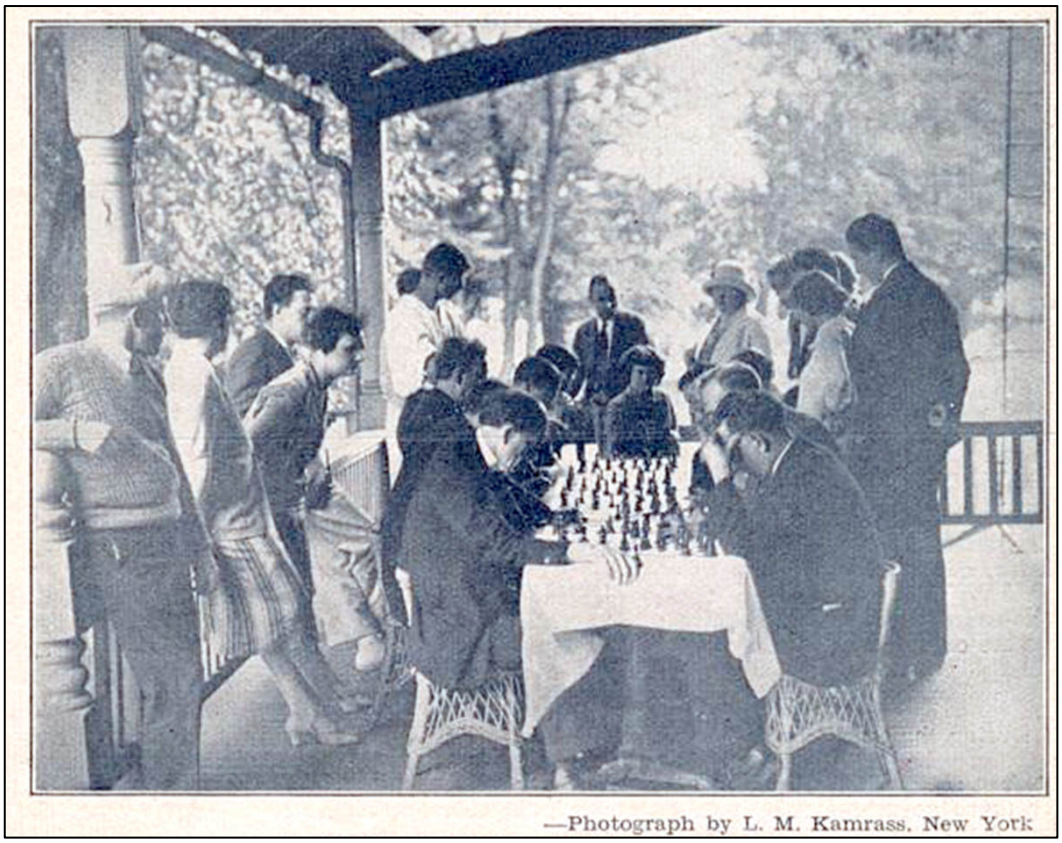
It is likely that Charles Murray contributed to the funding of this simultaneous exhibition, since both he and his daughter received coveted seats in the 43-player event. As we know, Capablanca performed very well, winning 42 and drawing only one – with young Marion Murray. More on this later.

Capablanca was on his way to a major international tournament at Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey, about 40 miles northwest of New York City. It was held at a beautiful luxury resort hotel there, which was also called Hotel Alamac and owned by the Latz family.

Again, I speculate it is likely that Charles Murray contributed to the funding of this event, since he brought his whole family to the hotel for the three-week-long tournament, and he was allowed to play with the masters in a special "Rapid Transit" chess tournament held there on the hotel's veranda on July 18.

The Rapid Transit tournament featured 10 players in a round robin, including five of the main tournament's grandmasters and five amateurs. Charles Murray participated as one of the amateurs. A "Rapid Transit" tournament is an early form of blitz chess popular at this

time, but which has since gone out of fashion. Players were given exactly 10 seconds per move, counted down by a third person with a stopwatch. At the end of every 10 seconds you had to make a move or forfeit.



—Photograph by L. M. Kamrass, New York

Here in this photo we can see the players lined up at a long table. Seated at left in front is Geza Maroczy, and at the far end of the table is our young Marion V. Murray, closely spectating the action. On her right his her mother Marion Downs Murray (standing).

Capablanca won both the main tournament and the Rapid Transit event. He was there with his wife and two young children.

Also sometime that July young Marion Murray played the "blindfold" game and "defeated" Frank Marshall. In early August the photograph seen on page 2 above, and the press release, were sent out to newspapers around the country.

Marion also played a consultation game with Marshall at Lake Hopatcong. The *American Chess Bulletin* reported:

"Partnered by Marshall, on 13 July Miss Marian Murray played a consultation game against Dr B.M. Anderson Jr of New York and Charles Murray, the girl's father. The game, a Queen's Gambit Declined, was drawn in 41 moves. Marshall spoke well of his little ally's play. ... A tussle on the chessboard between Max Rosen of the Manhattan Chess Club and Miss Murray resulted in favor of the famous violinist."

But somehow after this "chess summer" for the Murrays, their interest in chess waned. We can find no more mention of them anywhere in chess circles.

It was 1926, the middle of "The Roaring Twenties," and for the Murray millionaire family living in luxury in Manhattan there surely would have been much distraction and demand for their attention. Perhaps they continued their interest in chess at a low level, but Mrs. Murray apparently stopped trying to promote her daughter at this time – both as an "up and coming" child movie actress, and also as a "chess prodigy."

For the next five years they lived an extravagant lifestyle at the Waldorf-Astoria, and made a big splash in Manhattan.

An example of their extravagant luxury is their 1927 custom-built chauffeur-driven Mercedes motorcar, which they were well noted for driving around town. (See the official listing information on this famous car in the photograph, next page). It cost $28,000 at the time, an incredibly high price tag — that much money in 1927 would be equal to $415,000 today, adjusted for inflation.

But the Roaring Twenties and the high life of

The Murray's custom Mercedes

1928 Mercedes-Benz Model K Town Car (Castagna)

Tags: Studios, 1928, Mercedes-Benz, Designed/Built by Castagna

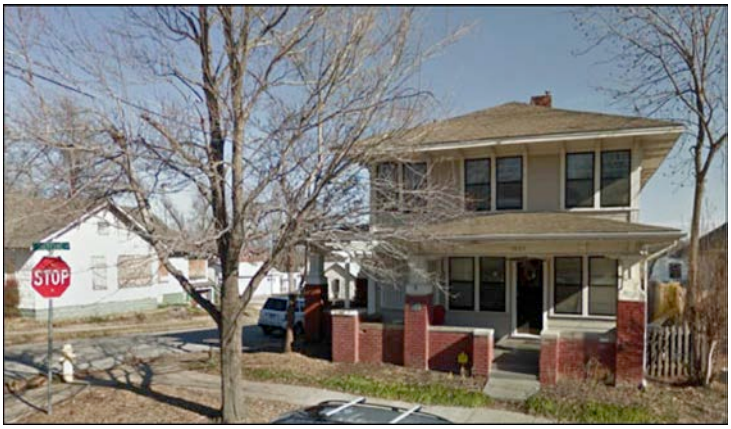
Mercedes-Benz 630K Sedanca de Ville by Castagna (1928)

One of Castagna's great masterpieces was this 1927 Mercedes-Benz Model K Town Car bodied for Millionaire Oklahoma oilman Charles Murray. Murray and his wife Marion Downs paid an astounding $28,000 for the car. While they may have made their fortune pumping oil in Oklahoma and selling land in North Dakota, the couple spent most of their time living in New York City, where they resided in the penthouse of the Waldorf-Astoria until the early 1930s. Their chauffeur driven Castagna Mercedes was a common sight in NYC.

Source: www.heacockclassic.com

the Murray family came to an end with the advent of the stock market crash in 1929 and the Great Depression of the 1930s. Apparently they lost the vast majority of their wealth, at least what they had not already spent.

In 1931, they returned to Tulsa, driving there in their famous car, and commenced a modest lifestyle. They rented a house just north of downtown in a nice affluent neighborhood – but far from the swanky localities of the city.



The Murray homes as it appears today, now run down.

They still had their beautiful car, which was parked in the garage but was too large to fit, so it stuck out and was covered with a makeshift awning for protection. They still had some personal luxuries like fur coats, but otherwise lived off of what little savings remained, and also off some regular income that Mrs. Murray still received from some oil properties her small oil company still maintained. It was enough to live a modest comfortable life during the dreary days of the "Dust Bowl" in the 1930s of Oklahoma, as the Depression droned on.

The 1940 census information states that the Murrays lived there along with Mr. Murray's mother. Miss Marion was by then 26 years old and still living at home, and not playing chess apparently.

Harold found sketchy information that our young Miss Marion was engaged to be married around this time, but the wedding did not come off. It is speculative, so we can't really say if it is true. Regardless, as far as we can find, she lived with her mother in their home in Tulsa for the rest of her life. Is it a case of a broken heart that never mended, and an over-bearing mother who never let her child go?

Charles Murray died in 1943, but the two women lived on. They regularly attended a Catholic Church just one block from their house. They could often bee seen walking around downtown Tulsa together, inseparable, strolling arm-in-arm.

Sometime around 1960, after their remaining savings and income dwindled, the two moved into the Flamingo Motel, on 11th street (Route 66).

Miss Marion died in 1964, and her mother just three weeks later… But before the elder Marion passed on, she walked into the *Tulsa World* newspaper offices and told her story to reporter, Nevin M. Black, who penned a very nice feature article about her, perhaps the first time a reasonably truthful article had ever been written about the two Marion Murrays.

The article was entitled, *"Pages From Past Unfold With Note of Motel Death,"* (April 8, 1964) and I quote some from it here:

"The fur-draped woman was the picture of loneliness as she came into the newsroom and handed a reporter a note on a sheet of motel stationery. It read: "Miss Marion V. Murray died Friday of a heart attack at the Flamingo Hotel…"

"Here was a page from the colorful past. It brought to mind a scene, perhaps witnessed by thousands of Tulsa residents over a score or more years, of two colorfully-dressed women, one up in age and the other considerably younger, walking through downtown streets and stores together."

"The younger, slender blonde woman often carried a small white Spitz dog. She was the brighter dresser of the two. Both carried their heads high and smiled at passersby, but seldom if ever stopped to visit with them. Both frequently wore long fur coats, even in hot weather."

"'She was my secretary as well as my daughter,' Mrs. Murray said. 'We were very close. We went everywhere together.'"

"Mrs. Murray, in a Gravelly voice, told about her family, a tale touching fabulous riches from real estate and oil, but hazy about dates. …"

The famous Mercedes car was also well known around Tulsa. After having rejected offers for it for decades, Mrs. Murray had to sell it around 1960, presumably to make ends meet. She described it for the article, "Our car was really something. It had Italian woodwork on the side and it took a prize in a Paris automobile show. We had leopard robes and pillows in it. People stared at it as we drove through the streets. We drove it here when we returned to Tulsa during the depression."

She died shortly after telling her self-promotion story to this reporter for one last time. The family is now buried at Calvary Cemetery in Tulsa.

Conclusions:

The remarkable life of the Murrays had its sad ending, it seems. But what are we to make of the chess claims made in 1926? Did young Miss Marion really draw a game with Capablanca only six months after learning how to play chess? Did she really then beat U.S. Champion Frank Marshall in a blindfold game?

Here is my opinion and speculation.

The promotional press release with Marshall is clearly unreliable and unbelievable. The photograph is certainly staged. Blindfold players usually aren't literally blindfolded and seated at the table like that. Frank Marshall wouldn't be the first chess master to praise a rich patron's child in order to flatter a source of future income. I doubt that Marshall would 'throw' a game to her, but we can imagine that the situation was a casual one, and the game might not have been real; they could have been messing around with blindfold play – and in the eyes of the mother who didn't necessarily understand chess or what they were doing, the result transmogrified into her defeating him, and then it was hyped up in the

press release with its sensational claims.

Marshall is variously quoted as saying the girl is talented, as 'praising' her play, and 'hoping to coach her' etc. We will never know how talented she really was. Maybe for someone who had only played a short time she did really appear to Marshall to have considerable talent. Again, he wouldn't be the first master to say that about a rich man's daughter and hope to get paid to give her chess lessons, whether or not he sincerely thought so.

Of more interest is the fact that she did get a draw with Capablanca at a simultaneous exhibition — among 43 players, most of whom were far more experienced than she was. What are we to make of this?

I think it really happened. I doubt very much that the great Cuban, and then world champion, would have even considered throwing a game to her for money, even if Mrs. Marion had been brazen enough to make such an offer. A gentleman like Capablanca would have angrily refused any such offer.

Maybe she totally earned the draw. Maybe the girl, despite being a raw beginner, had as much good luck with chess as her mother had with oilfield gushers! We will never know.

But we can speculate about a more likely possibility — although Capablanca would never throw a chess game, it is possible he might 'gift' her a draw under the right circumstances, motivated by his own reasons. I have seen grandmasters kindly gift certain players with a draw offer like this sometimes at public exhibitions. I saw a GM offer a kid in a wheelchair a draw in a position in which the GM still held a small advantage and definitely could have played on with good chances of winning. I felt sure it was a gift to encourage him, and certainly the kid was overjoyed to take the draw.

Might that be what Capablanca did also? Consider that he must have met the girl and her father before at the club, and knew her father was an investor in the upcoming big tournament. Consider also that he might have liked the girl, thought she showed some talent, and wanted to encourage her to pursue chess.

A young female player at that time was a sight even more rare than it is today. There was no scholastic chess then, and very few decent women tournament players. In that case, one could easily imagine that after the game went on for a while and Marion was still sitting with a roughly equal position on the board, Capablanca might have offered the draw as a gift without pushing for the win, as he otherwise would be expected to do. He could 'justify' the gift by saying the position was equal, and who could argue? By doing so he would thrill the cute girl and encourage her to get more into chess. It would be good for the game to see her grow up to be a master, for example, and for that she needed encouragement. And he would of course also please her father in an honorable way. It is worth noting that Capa was less than a year away for his upcoming match with Alekhine and was in need of financial backers. Although he wouldn't 'throw' a game for money, he might give a gift, at his own behest, and not consider it dishonorable to do so.

Unfortunately, Miss Marion V. Murray's life did not live up to the promise that her mother's press releases asserted for her when she was a young. Perhaps a girl that rich might have had no reason to seriously put in the work required to pursue a career in acting or chess.

As an actress, her greatest role was that of a rich girl experiencing a life of lavish luxury in New York City during the Roaring Twenties, and all the personal dramas that might have entailed. Her second greatest role was that of the survivor of the great fall, as she and her mother salvaged a life of minimal dignity out of their riches, living like a modern Miss Haversham in a small rented house in Tulsa, touring around town with her mother in the famous German motorcar, with head held high.

EN PASSANT:

Rolando A. Aragon (1938-2020): Chess Warrior

By Jim Hollingsworth — Today is July 2nd and I am shocked to learn my old friend and chess warrior, First Sergeant (U.S. Army retired) Rolando A. Aragon, has left us. We played a lot of chess in the good old days when I was a young Soldier at Fort Sill. His love for chess never waned. And he was a true warrior; serving our Nation's Armed Forces to keep us all safe.

I called him and invited him to play in the 2019 Fort Worth Veterans Open Chess Championship. I was quite pleased when he showed up. His competitive spirit was still the same. He was a formidable opponent for all. That was the last time I saw him.

Warrior Service and "Barracks King"

Aragon served our Nation with exemplary distinction during his 25 years of active duty; as an Infantryman, Paratrooper, Supply Sergeant, Red-leg Artilleryman, and First Sergeant.

He served in Belgium, Central America, Germany, Italy, Korea, Mogadishu, Vietnam, Fort Hood, Fort Ord, Fort Polk, Fort Sill and many other places.

At Fort Sill's Reception Station, he was often the first real Soldier many new recruits encountered. He ensured they swapped their civilian clothes for new uniforms and learned to march before transferring them to Drill Sergeants and Basic Training. He was also the guy who ensured all received their first immaculate Army haircut (high and tight – the higher the better). First Sergeant Aragon received the Meritorious Service Medal twice along with many other awards and decorations. After retiring he continued his valuable service for another ten years by working in FEMA.

In the "good old days" before US Chess kept computerized records, First Sergeant Aragon was one of the most feared chess players at Fort Sill. There were many demands on his time and few opportunities to play in rated tournaments. He surely would have made Expert if given the chance.

In this photo, taken at the 2019 Fort Worth Veterans Chess Championship, a lot may have changed since First Sergeant Aragon was the "Barracks King." But his eyes remain as sharp and focused as when he inspected his Soldiers. He soaks in every detail of the board.
His last rated tournament was sometime in the late 1980's. When told the cover of Chess Life recently had a photo of a Grand Master playing chess while skydiving, he said, "I would have absolutely loved to have done that, but I was too busy making sure everyone else jumped out of the airplane!"

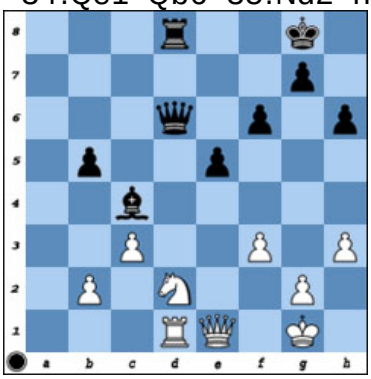
Online Obituary: https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/fort-worth-tx/rolando-aragon-9183964

Ryan Amburgy and Elizabeth Braddy Shine at National Invitationals

The annual national invitational tournaments for high school champions was canceled this year due to the virus, and was instead held online. The Denker (high school) and the Haring (girls) events were held July 25-26 on chess.com. The Barber (junior high), Rockefeller (elementary) and Senior invitationals will be held Aug 1-2.

Amburgy tied for first place in the U2200 section of the Invitational Blitz Championship, new this year and named after FM Sunil Weeramantry. He finished with an impressive 8-1 score in that event, losing only to the other top finisher and defeating all others.

RagingKnightNC
Amburgy, Ryan [C91]
Weeramantry Blitz Invitational Chess.com, 24.07.2020
[Blitz - G/3+2.] 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.c3 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.d4 Bg4 9.Re1 0-0 10.d5 Nb8 11.h3 Bh5 12.Nbd2 c6 13.dxc6 Nxc6 14.Nf1 Na5 15.Bc2 Bg6 16.Bg5 Nh5 17.Bxe7 Qxe7 18.Ne3 Nf4 19.Nd5 Nxd5 20.Qxd5 Rac8 21.Red1 Rfd8 22.a4 Nc4 23.axb5 axb5 24.Ra2 Rc5 25.Qd3 f6 26.Qe2 Bf7 27.Rda1 Rc7 28.Bb3 d5 29.Ra8 Qe8 30.R8a7 Qd7 31.Rxc7 Qxc7 32.exd5 Bxd5 33.Bxc4 Bxc4 34.Qe1 Qb6 35.Nd2 h6 36.Rd1 Qd6 37.f3



(diagram) 37...Bb3 38.Nxb3 Qxd1 39.Kf2 Qxb3 0-1

In the 6-round Denker championship, played at a fast G/70 time control, Amburgy finished in the middle of the pack in an event which included GMs and IMs.

Elizabeth Braddy represented Oklahoma very well in her first such event, finishing with a score of 3½. She was paired way up every round and beat three Class B players and drew a Class A – the only person under 1900 to get a plus score!

Braddy, Elizabeth (1290)
Binca, Gaaya (1640) [B13]
Ruth Haring National Girls Invitational 25.07.2020 *[Notes by TB]*
[Online play. G/70] 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Qb3 Bxf3 9.gxf3 e6 10.Qxb7 Nxd4 11.Bb5+ Nxb5 12.Qc6+ Ke7 13.Qxb5 Qd7 14.Nxd5+ Qxd5 15.Qxd5 exd5 [Elizabeth shows an impressive opening knowledge here as the two girls have zipped out the main line of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack in the Caro.] 16.Be3 [IM Stuart Rachels once played 16.Bg5+ which I thought was a serious improvement in this famous ending. But Elizabeth prefers the main line.] 16...Ke6 17.0-0 [17.0-0-0 is the main line but after 17...Bb4 most master games end in draws.] 17...Bd6? [Elizabeth's opponent makes a mistake on her first move out of the book. This position for the B blocks protection of the weak d-pawn.] 18.Rfe1 Kd7 19.Rad1 Kc6 20.Rc1+ [20.Rd3! Rad8 21.Rc1+ is a more active way of activating her rooks. After 21...Kb7 22.Kg2 White is either winning the weak d-pawn (with Rc5 coming soon) or getting a rook to the seventh rank. i.e. 22...Be7 *(22...Be5 23.Rc5)* 23.Rb3+ Ka8 24.Rc7] 20...Kb7 21.Red1 Rhd8 22.Kh1 Be5? [22...Be7 23.Rd3 Rac8 white is slightly better] 23.Rc5 d4 [23...Bxb2? 24.Rb5+] 24.Rxe5 dxe3 25.Rxd8 exf2?? [Black overlooks something and outsmarts herself. But Elizabeth should be winning the pawn-up rook ending after 25...Rxd8 26.fxe3 Rd1+ 27.Kg2 Rd2+ 28.Kg3 Rxb2 29.Re7+ Kb6 30.a4! Ra2 31.Rxf7 Rxa4 32.Rxg7 a5 33.Rxh7 Still, in this line black would get drawing chances, whereas now its game over.] 26.Rd1 Rd8 27.Rf1 Rd2 28.Kg2 Rxb2 29.Rxf2 1-0

3rd Annual Queen City of the Prairie Open & Fort Worth Championship

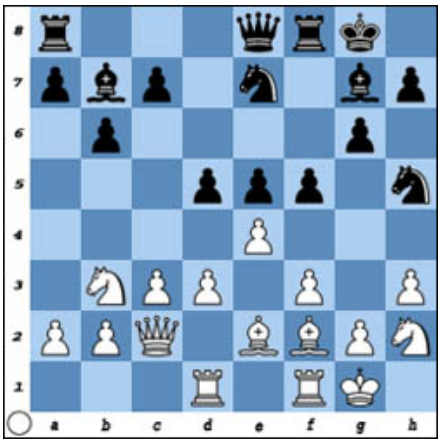
Last update 20.07.2020 06:03:56

Final Ranking crosstable after 5 Rounds

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	1.Rd	2.Rd	3.Rd	4.Rd	5.Rd	Pts.
1		AMBURGY Ryan [1846]	2133	USA	18b1	10w1	15b1	3b1	6w1	5
2		WOODWARD Andy [1856]	2169	USA	22w1	4b1	3w0	11b1	9w1	4
3	CM	STEINER Tim [1929]	2040	USA	23w1	14b1	2b1	1w0	4b½	3,5
4	WIM	ROOT Alexey [2025]	2000	USA	29w1	2w0	19b1	14b1	3w½	3,5
5		DEVIPRASATH Sharvesh [1578]	1977	USA	16b1	-½	20w1	6b0	15w1	3,5
6		GRAHAM Shaun [1922]	1813	USA	-½	13w1	7b1	5w1	1b0	3,5
7		HOLLINGSWORTH Jim [1983]	1800	USA	-½	27b1	6w0	24b1	16w1	3,5
8		BLAKEMAN Cole [1736]	2082	USA	19w1	12b1	-½	-½	0	3
9		FELDMAN Konner [1748]	2054	USA	25b1	15w0	12b1	18w1	2b0	3
10		XU Jayden [1683]	1818	USA	24w1	1b0	14w0	26b1	20w1	3
11		FUKUCHI Curtis K [1781] **	1811	USA	20b0	23w1	26b1	2w0	21b1	3
12		BUFFORD Adley [1434]	1772	USA	21b1	8w0	9w0	28b+	19b1	3
13		HEISE Robert R [1364]	1567	USA	17w½	6b0	22w1	20b½	24w1	3
14		DEO Shreyas S [unr]	1244	USA	-1	3w0	10b1	4w0	18b1	3
15		TIPTON Eric A [unr] **	1794	USA	26w1	9b1	1w0	-½	5b0	2,5
16		SCHWETKE Douglas [unr] **	1500	USA	5w0	22b½	27w1	25b1	7b0	2,5
17		WENZ William M [unr]	2001	USA	13b½	20w½	18b0	19w0	27b1	2
18		MORALES Stephen [unr]	1690	USA	1w0	29b1	17w1	9b0	14w0	2
19		SMITH Alan Daniel [1437]	1664	USA	8b0	21w1	4w0	17b1	12w0	2
20		ABRAMS Greyson [unr]	1459	USA	11w1	17b½	5b0	13w½	10b0	2
21		LLEWELLYN Brandon [unr]	1380	USA	12w0	19b0	29w1	22b1	11w0	2
22		TENG Benjamin [unr]	1728	USA	2b0	16w½	13b0	21w0	29b1	1,5
23		CHRYST Thomas [unr] **	1613	USA	3b0	11b0	24w0	-½	26w1	1,5
24		AMBURGY Chris [unr]	1474	USA	10b0	25w½	23b1	7w0	13b0	1,5
25		BLACK Kendall [unr]	1652	USA	9w0	24b½	-½	16w0	0	1
26		CRANE Thomas E [unr]	1454	USA	15b0	-1	11w0	10w0	23b0	1
27		DAVIS Timothy J [unr] **	1349	USA	-½	7w0	16b0	29b½	17w0	1
28		CABELLO Mario [unr]	1317	USA	-½	-½	0	12w-	0	1
29		LARSEN James [unr]	1500	USA	4b0	18w0	21b0	27w½	22w0	0,5

Another actual Over-The-Board tournament was held against the current pandemic trends in Fort Worth on July 18-19. Won by Ryan Amburgy with a 5-0 score ahead of young Dallas prodigy Andy Woodward (4). TD was Louis A. Reed Jr. A game from this event:

Hollingsworth,Jim (1800) - Graham,Shaun (1876) [B06]
Queen City of the Prairie Open, 18.07.2020 *[Notes by TB]*
1.e4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.c3 d6 4.Be2 b6 5.0-0 Bb7 6.d3 e6 7.Qc2 Ne7 8.Be3 Nd7 9.Nbd2 0-0 10.Nb3 Nf6 11.h3 e5 12.Rad1 Qe8 13.Nh2 d5 14.f3? Nh5 15.Bf2 f5 (See Diagram)



16.Nc1? Nf4 17.Bg3 Bh6 18.Rfe1 Qf7 19.Rf1 Qf6 20.Rde1 Nh5 21.Bf2 Qg5 22.h4 Qf6 [22...Qf4!-+] 23.g3 Bc8 24.Kh1 Kh8 25.Bd1 fxe4 26.dxe4 dxe4 27.Nb3? [27.fxe4 Bh3-+; 27.Qxe4! Nf5! 28.Qxa8 *(28.Ne2 Ba6!)* 28...Nfxg3+ 29.Kg1 Bxc1 30.Qd5 Nxf1 31.Nxf1 Bxb2-+]27...e3 28.Ng4 Bxg4 29.fxg4 exf2 30.gxh5 fxe1Q [and black won.] 0-1

With Over-The-Board play taking a hit this year most chess fans have turned to online play. BUT there is an alternative! Correspondence chess is still alive and a great way to play, despite the presence of computers. And it is a great way to improve your chess too, as you can dive more deeply into the games than you ever did before.

Let's look at a classic example. This is the oldest correspondence game in our OKIE DATABASE. It is played by *Bela Rozsa* (White), who of course is the 11-time Oklahoma State Champion in OTB play (from 1946 he dominated chess here for 20+ years), but he also was an accomplished correspondence chess player.

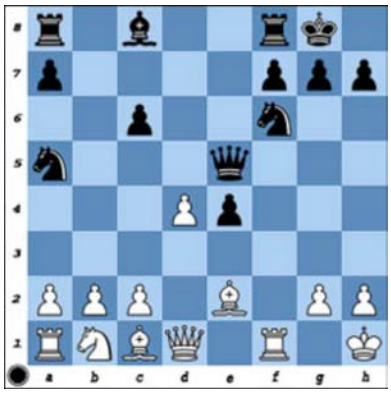
Black is *Walter Suesman* who was active in New England in the late 1940s and thru the 1950s Walter Suesman enjoyed victories over strong senior masters like Kashdan, Reshevsky, Yanofsky, and Horowitz.

Rozsa, Bela (2100)
Suesman, W.B. (2350) [C59]
North American Correspondence Tourn, 1943
[Braunlich]
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Na5 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Be2 h6 9.Nf3 [This is the classic main line of the Two Knights Defense to the Italian Game, and has been played many times before. It is still popular. Fischer tried 9.Nh3 and won against Bisguier (see his My 60 Memorable Games).]

9...e4 10.Ne5 Bd6 11.f4 [More common here is 11.d4 exd3 12.Nxd3 Qc7 13.h3 0ñ0 14.0ñ0 c5 when black is considered to have good compensation for the pawn. Indeed, black wins the majority of the games in the database.]

11...0-0 [11...exf3 12.Nxf3 0ñ0 13.0ñ0 Qc7 is also the main line here, with black having good compensation (idea ...Bg4, ...c5, ...Bb7).]

12.0-0 Bxe5 13.fxe5 Qd4+ 14.Kh1 Qxe5 15.d4



15...Qe7?

[15...exd3 is better in my opinion, and indeed black scores 75% in the six games in my database with it. Instead, retreating the queen leaves white with a good center. The position is now roughly equal, and probably this is all black wanted to get out of the opening, as correspondence play focuses on deep middlegames. Here I tend to prefer White, mostly because Black's N on a5 is out of play and awkward to get back in. It wants to go through c6 to d4, but the pawn on d4 is now preventing black from ...c5 (temporarily at least). Now the two players settle down into maneuvering.]

16.b3!? [Not only planning Bb2, but preventing ...c5 as well.]

16...Rd8 17.c4 Nb7! [It looks like black can activate his knight with 17...c5 18.d5 Nc6 19.Nc3 Nd4 But Rozsa no doubt was ready to take advantage now of the weak c-pawn with 20.Ba3 (attacking c5 and threatening Qxd4). 20...Qe5 21.Na4 Nxe2 22.Qxe2 Ng4 23.g3ĺ]

18.Bb2 [Black's idea with the retreat ...Nb7 was to meet the blockading move 18.Be3 with 18...Nd6 and ...Nf5. Fred Reinfeld, annotating this game for Chess Review, called that 'troublesome.' But is it that bad? In that case 19.Nc3 Nf5 20.Qd2 White looks better to me, as he can complete development with Rae1 and then target the weak black e-pawn with Bd1-c2, etc., and it is hard to see how black

will get counterplay against white's solid center.]

18...Nd6 19.Qe1?! [I think White needs to blockade the pawn, and if you aren't going to do it with the B then you should do it with the N: 19.Na3! Nf5 20.Nc2 Be6 21.Qd2 followed by Ne3 with a slight edge.]

19...Nf5 20.Qf2 Be6? [Reinfeld correctly pointed out Black needs to advance his passer here and play for complications. The move allows black to activate his pieces dangerously, and is an example of how modern chess has changed. A modern GM would play ...e3 without much thought here! For example: 20...e3 21.Qf4 Ne4! 22.Nc3 Nf2+ 23.Rxf2 *(23.Kg1 Rxd4ñ+)* 23...exf2 24.Ne4 Nxd4 and black is much better, if not winning.]

21.Na3 h5 [Black comes up with a creative plan, but it seems to not be strong enough.]

22.Nc2 Ng4 23.Bxg4 hxg4 24.Qf4 Qh4

25.Qe5! [Reinfeld calls this "A very fine, courageous and far-sighted move." What he means by this is that in some variations the Queen is going to threaten mate on g7 after d4ñd5. But my boring computer prefers the simple Rae1, which it reckons is much better.]

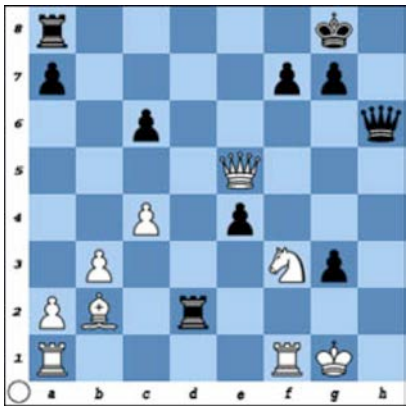
25...g3?! [Black rolls headlong into an unsound sacrifice. He should instead slow the attack a bit and try 25...Qh7 26.Kg1 (threatening the e-pawn now) 26...Nh4 27.Ne3 Qg6 intending ...f5 if needed, with complications, although white surely is better.]

26.h3 Nxd4? [An unsound combination that black had been heading for. But he has overlooked something.]

[Note that 26...Ne3?! 27.d5!! wins]

27.Nxd4 Bxh3 28.Nf3?? [It's unbelievable that Rozsa would overlook a simple winning combination: 28.Qxg7+ Kxg7 29.Nf5+ But hey, this game was played in the middle of World War II, so who knows what was going on in their lives! I suspect some non-chess reason was behind Rozsa's mistake. Now black gets compensation for his material.]

28...Bxg2+ 29.Kxg2 Rd2+! 30.Kg1 Qh6



[Although white is two pieces up, and black has a rook hanging to boot, it appears the game is equal!]

31.Qxg3 [31.Qxg7+ Qxg7 32.Bxg7 exf3 33.Rxf3 *(33.Be5 Rg2+ 34.Kh1 Rh2+ 35.Kg1 Rg2+=)* 33...Kxg7 34.Rxg3+ *(34.Raf1 Rxa2 35.Rxf7+ Kh6!=)* 34...Kf8=]

31...exf3 32.Rf2 [32.Bc1 Qe3+ 33.Kh1 Qh6+ 34.Kg1 Qe3+=]

32...Rad8 33.Be5 [Here apparently there was some kind of a mix-up about the notation in the correspondence and either the game was awarded a win for white here for a technical reason or it was finished but the remaining moves are not known. A moral victory for Rozsa I guess. One of the knocks on correspondence chess was that so many games were flubbed up in the notation sent back and forth on post cards. Modern correspondence play, which uses email or something similar, tends to minimize that. Try correspondence play sometime, you might prefer it to shallow online blitz!]

1-0

OKIE DATABASE UPDATE PUBLISHED

An update for the Okie Database has been published on our website:
www.ocfchess.org
You can append it to your existing copy of the main Okie Database

FEEDBACK ON LAST MONTH'S JUDE ACERS ARTICLE

NM Robert Harrington sent the following funny anecdote on the Acers article:

"You always find interesting topics to write about! I really enjoyed your article on Jude Acers and look forward to the video documentary.

Here is my Jude Acers story: On my honeymoon, my wife and I went to New Orleans. Neither one us had ever been there and we knew it would it be a fun place to visit. While walking down one of the streets...low and behold there sat Jude Acers. THE Jude Acers! So of course I had to play him. Before we reached where he was sitting I told my wife "Don't tell him that I am a chess expert, because I am going to give him a run for his money.I am not your average passerby that challenges him to a game." I sat down and Jude crushed me in about 26 moves. Then Jude said "You are not bad for a casual player. They actually have chess instruction books you can read if you want to improve." I told him thanks for the info and thanks for the game. I was not happy as I walked away. Especially when my new wife got a chuckle over the entire incident!

Of course now I am so grateful I got to play him that day, and I get a chuckle when I reminisce about that experience. We have never had a chance to go back to New Orleans."

Edward Hopper, 2020

By IM John Donaldson

REVIEW: Four New Books by Everyman

The English firm Everyman Chess (www.everymanchess.com), formerly Cadogan Chess, has been one of the leading publishers in the field for approximately four decades. Garry Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors* series is the best-known of the books Everyman has published, but what really has put the company on the map is its "move by move" format where frequent questions and exercises engage the reader and help them in the learning experience. Two of Everyman's recent offerings utilize this approach.

San Diego International Master Cyrus Lakdawala is one of the workhorses for Everyman and has written dozens of books for them covering all aspects of the game. This productivity sometimes leads to authors running out of ideas but that has not been a problem for Lakdawala who has found a second career in writing now that his playing days are over.

His enthusiasm for the subject is evident in *The Modern Defense* (2019, 415 pages, $29.95), which offers a complete opening repertoire for Black. The heart of Lakdawala's answer to 1.e4 is the sequence 1…g6 2.d4 d6 3.Nc3 c6. Delaying the development of Black's king bishop not only discourages hyper-aggressive White systems based on Bc4 (met by a well-timed …d5) or Be3, Qd2 and Bh6 (not playing …Bg7 saves a tempo to accelerate play elsewhere) it actually can win time against the Austrian Attack. Lakdawala explains that after 1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c6 4.f4 d5 5.e5 the Black king bishop is misplaced and belongs on the f8-a3 diagonal. His solution: 1.e4 g6 2.d4 d6 3.Nc3 c6 4.f4 d5 5.e5 when Black's d-pawn has taken two moves to reach d5, but his position is actually better as the bishop on f8 is preferable to being on g7. This line, which relies on positional understanding, is much easier to learn than analogous variations of the Austrian Attack in the Pirc (1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.f4) which are considerably more theoretical.

After 1.d4 g6 2.c4 Black's choices are limited if he doesn't want to transpose into the King's Indian Defense. Lakdawala in his 2012 book *The Modern Defence: Move by Move* (also published by Everyman) advocated 1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 e5 which has been doing well of late at the top levels. Here he offers something different: 1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.e4 e6 6.Nc3 Ne7. This unusual Benoni was played as far back as 1961 – by no less than Tigran Petrosian – but has only recently caught on.

The Modern Defense also offers lines against the English and other White first move options. In particular the move-order 1.d4 g6 works well against the popular London system as Black is well-positioned to play a quick …e5 harassing the bishop on f4.

Players from 1800-2300, who have a solid foundation having mastered basic opening principles by answering 1.e4 with 1…e5, and who are looking to branch out, will find *The Modern Defense* an excellent first step.

Paraguayan Grandmaster Zenon Franco is another Everyman regular with an excellent body of work. His latest effort *Planning: Move by Move* (2019, 414 pages, $29.95) utilizes the Everyman instructional format perfectly with the 74 games not only well-annotated but with questions and answers sprinkled throughout.

Three World Champions games figure prominently in this book devoted to finding the right plan: Magnus Carlsen, Vassily Smyslov and Anatoly Karpov. One of the latter's efforts that gets the spotlight is game nine of Korchnoi-Karpov of the 1981 World Championship match where Black gives a lesson on how to defend against the isolated queen pawn. That game featured the pawn structure d4 (isolated) versus …c6 (isolated) and …e6 – A.K. willingly capturing on c6 with a pawn instead of a piece to prevent the liquidating d5. Those who thought this was a novel strategy will find another game in this book, also from a World Championship match (Lasker-Capablanca, Havana 1921) where Black adopted this strategy.

Players from 1800-2400 will benefit from *Planning: Move by Move* which is a first-rate instructional effort

The final two new offerings from Everyman are *The Queen's Gambit* (2019, 251 pages, $27.95) by Argentine Grandmaster Damian Lemos and *First Steps: King's Indian Defense* (2019, 333 pages, $24.95) by English International Master Andrew Martin. The former examines the Queen's Gambit from White's perspective including the Queen's Gambit Declined (Exchange Variation with Nge2 and f3 planning e4), Tarrasch (main lines with g3), Slav (Exchange), Queen's Gambit Accepted (3.e4), Chigorin (3.cxd5 Qxd5 4.e3 e5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Bd2 Bxc3 7.bxc3), Albin Counter-Gambit (4.Nf3 and 5.a3) and various odds and end. The material, arranged around 60 model games, will be most useful for players rated between 1800 and 2300.

Last but not least is an introduction to the King's Indian by Martin who has written a number of books on the K.I.D. over the past three decades. He covers all variations with 111 model games, explanatory prose emphasized over lots of variations, making this is a good first book on the King's Indian for players in the 1800-2200 range.